



PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES (PSSF)

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Questions may be directed to the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) at (916) 651-6960.

THE PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILY (PSSF) PROGRAM

I. Purpose

The primary goals of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program are to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption, or by another permanent living arrangement.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 established the Family Preservation and Support Services Program, geared toward community-based family preservation and support under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act and according to the United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 7, Subchapter IV, Part B, subpart 2, commencing with section 629a. In 1997, the program was reauthorized under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (Public Law 105-89), and renamed the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) with two additional services put in place: time-limited reunification, and supportive adoption services. The PSSF Amendment of 2001 (H.R. 2873) (Public Law 107-133) extended the program through 2006.

Recently, the PSSF Program was reauthorized through federal fiscal year 2011 by the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-288).

II. Funding

Funds to States

The PSSF federal funding is distributed to states under a formula grant. There is a required 25 percent match required by each state. California meets the required 25 percent federal match using funds from the State Family Preservation Program.

Ninety (90) per cent of PSSF funds are allocated to the counties. The State is permitted to use ten (10) percent of the funding for state overhead costs. Of the amount allocated for overhead for state support costs, California has chosen to use the bulk of the funds to finance state contracts. These contracts are used to provide kinship support services, post adoption services, permanency mediation services, etc.

Funds to Counties

The funds that go to counties are allocated to each county based on the number of children zero to 17 years of age in the county, as well as the number of children in poverty. The minimum PSSF county allocation is \$10,000 to ensure a minimum level of funding for smaller counties. Counties can utilize all funds provided in this allocation without a match at the local level (as the match is provided by the State), but no more than ten (10) percent of the funds may be used for administrative costs.

Counties submit a three-year plan outlining their PSSF services to the CDSS Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) and submit annual reports on the plan. All of

California's 58 counties receive PSSF funding, and each county is responsible for the use of PSSF funding at the local level.

III. Program Features

The PSSF funding is used to support services to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, to improve parenting skills and increase relationship skills within the family to prevent child abuse and neglect, while also promoting timely family reunification when children must be separated from their parents for their own safety. The PSSF funds are also to be used by child welfare agencies to remove barriers which impede the process of adoption when children cannot be safely reunited with their families and to address the unique issues adoptive families and children may face.

With the reauthorization under the Adoptions and Safe Families Act, PSSF funds must be expended with a minimum of twenty (20) percent designated under each of four service components. Failure to do so will require the state to provide a strong rationale if the funds are below the required twenty percent in each category. The four service components are:

Family Preservation

The term "family preservation services" means services for children and families designed to help families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis. Services include:

- Services designed to help children, where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed, or to be placed for adoption with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be safe, in some other planned permanent living arrangement
- Pre-placement preventive services programs, such as intensive family preservation/maintenance programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families
- Service programs designed to provide follow-up care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement
- Respite care to children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents)
- Services designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health and nutrition
- Infant safe haven programs to provide a way for a parent to safely relinquish a newborn infant at a safe haven designated pursuant to state law (i.e. Safely Surrendered Babies).

Family Support Services

The term “family support services” means community-based services to promote the safety and well-being of children and families designed to:

- Increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families)
- Increase parents’ confidence and competence in their parental capacity
- Afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment
- To strengthen parental relationships, promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development

Adoption Promotion and Support Services

The term “adoption promotion and support services” means services and activities designed to ensure permanency for children through family reunification, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- Pre- and post-adoptive services as necessary to support adoptive families so that they can make a lifetime commitment to their children.
- Activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families.

Time-Limited Family Reunification Services

The term “time-limited family reunification services” means the services and activities that are provided to a child that is removed from their home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution, and to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child, in order to facilitate the reunification of the child, safely, appropriately and in a timely fashion, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date the child is considered to have entered foster care. Services and activities include but are not limited to:

- Individual, group, and family counseling
- Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services
- Mental health services
- Assistance to address domestic violence
- Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries
- Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described above

IV. Target Population

The PSSF Program provides grants to states and Indian tribes to help vulnerable families remain intact by establishing and operating integrated, preventive family preservation services and community-based family support services for families at risk or in crisis.

V. Program Oversight

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) within the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has been designated by the Governor as the single state agency to administer and oversee the funds.

In accordance with federal Title IV-B Plan mandates, the CDSS submits an Annual Progress and Services Report that includes an annual report regarding PSSF activity from the previous year.

The OCAP provides training and technical assistance through its consultants and departmental resources, as well as its training and technical assistance contracts.

VI. References

[P.L. 109-288, September 28, 2006](#)

Definitions of the four required components are found in [United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 7, Subchapter IV, Part B, subpart 2, section 629a.](#)

[Welfare and Institutions Code section 16600](#)

County Fiscal Letters: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/PG960.htm>